

Roosevelt Island  
Operating Corporation

# ROOSEVELT ISLAND NEWS

Community, Identity, Conversations & Innovations

Issue 15: June, 2023

## From the President's Desk:

Dear Roosevelt Island Community:

I'm sitting down to write this letter just hours after we cut the ribbon on Sportspark. What an amazing day! To see all the hard work and dedication so many individuals put into this project come together in such a spectacular way is incredibly heartening and inspiring to me. The early feedback from community on the renovation has been very heartening, too.

It's no secret to anyone who knows Roosevelt Island that Sportspark was in dire need of help. The facility originally opened in 1977, and it showed; the complex was dated, run down, and quite frankly, falling into disrepair. We knew that a simple facelift wasn't going to cut it. This needed to be a massive, well-capitalized project that would completely revamp the facility and give island residents the kind of wellness complex they so richly deserved. I'm proud to say I think our team hit the mark—from the pool to the basketball court and everything in between, the facility is just incredible. By the time you're reading this, I hope you have had a chance to take a tour and see the new Sportspark for yourselves. And if you haven't already, please consider joining as members. Sportspark really has something to offer every islander!

Sportspark was the second big ribbon cutting in May, as we also cut the ribbon on the brand new Pickleball Courts located just behind the complex. This was a community passion project come to life, as many island residents were fiercely advocating for these courts, and RIOC made sure to listen. I want to shout-out Vicki Feinmel, Joyce Short, and Lorraine Altman in particular, who helped make this pickleball dream a reality for Roosevelt Island. I peeked outside the window after the Sportspark grand opening and saw that the courts were in use, even on a busy weekday morning. Another heartening site.

Improving our island infrastructure is always something I'm thinking about, as is island safety. Statistically speaking, you probably won't find a safer neighborhood in all of New York City than Roosevelt Island. But there has been a recent rash of alarming incidents, which include a persist bullying problem that has pervaded in one of our schools, and they required swift action. We aren't resting on our laurels when it comes to responding to these issues. In May we released a new 10-point plan to increase island safety, which included among other things a newly developed PSD Island Stabilization Team with increased foot and bike patrols, the integration of our island camera system with the NYPD, more social services in certain resident buildings, the development of an action plan to combat bullying. Some of these changes you'll see immediately, and some will continue to take time to build-out. But as we progress with implementing our 10-Point Plan, RIOC will continue to keep the community informed of our work and if any major issues arise.

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Shelton J. Haynes, President & CEO  
Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation



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# WHAT'S HAPPENING



- **Roosevelt Island Day** will take place June 10th from 11AM-4PM at Blackwell Plaza and Meditation Lawn. This year RIOC has decided to return to a more family friendly, carnival feel for island residents of all ages to enjoy. In addition to games and rides, we'll also have community groups tabling at the event, food trucks, music and much more!
- **Fourth of July Fireworks** – The annual Roosevelt Island Fourth of July Fireworks Extravaganza is just weeks away! As in previous years, RIOC has been allocated 1,500 tickets for island residents to take in the incredible display from Four Freedoms Park, so please make sure you're signed up for our Roosevelt Island email and text alerts to ensure your chance at procuring tickets.
- **Roosevelt Island Summer Movie Series** – Our Summer Movie Series kicks off this year on June 23rd with "A League of Their Own" followed by "Super Pets" on July 14th. There will be a series of five films shown during the summer at Firefighter's Field on a 40-foot screen, with food vendors selling on-site during each screening.



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I also want to take a moment here to reiterate our commitment to stronger external communication. This newsletter, the community calendar, the RIOC Advisory system, social media, the monthly PSD meetings—we're working hard to increase the frequency of our communications and the breadth of topics we touch on. Every department within RIOC is working hard to make Roosevelt Island the absolute best it can be, and we want to share more of that effort with you, in addition to building stronger ties between RIOC and the community. The launch of our Constituent Services Department is also going to be a big part of that push; island residents will be able to schedule appointments with us directly to discuss all matters related to our island operations.

We've had a lot of big things happening on the island over the last few months, and we intend to keep that positive momentum going as we head into the summer.

Regards,

**Shelton J. Haynes**  
President & CEO





## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Amy Firestein

**Title:** Director of Procurement

**Department:** Procurement (Administration) – Reporting to Legal

**RIOC Employee Since:** June 2018

**Area of Responsibility:** Procurement, which is a fancy way to say I help buy goods and services for the corporation! Within this broad responsibility, I get to interact with all departments!

#### *How did you first get started with RIOC?*

I got started with RIOC in the summer of 2018 when I applied for the Procurement Specialist position. When I began, I had the honor to work with amazing colleagues who really mastered their skills and knew I was joining very well-run machine of an organization. There were many tenured employees I learned from, and I am proud to continue, to the best of my abilities, that legacy and effectiveness.

#### *What does a typical day look like for you as procurement manager?*

In my new role as Director of Procurement, I look forward to continuing to develop procurement trainings to share with my colleagues. There is always more for me to learn about New York State Procurement as well as more to share with my fellow RIOC team members to more efficiently and accurately meet the needs of our organization. While there will continue to be an element of repetition and procurement tracking in my day to day operations, I hope to gain some personnel support for the department and that will allow for more attention and development of such state programs such as our diversity purchasing programs and marketing of RIOC to raise our profile and gain new vendors. There will always remain the daily responsibilities of approving requisitions, issuing and reporting purchase orders to consulting with managers and directors about active or planned procurements. There are statutory records that must be maintained and a lot of time is spent collecting and maintaining records of the procurement methods RIOC uses for each purchase made. Following New York State Finance Laws, procurement also publicly bids public work over \$50,000. This means that a very detailed and rigorous procurement process is conducted and that will be coordinated with the department making the purchase and this is another part of a day in the life of procurement! In addition I work closely with the finance department as there are many financial reports to track and submit to the State to ensure we are acting with fiscal conservatism.

#### *Can you tell us a little about your professional journey—what led you to where you are today?*

After earning a Bachelor of Arts in Liberal Studies in San Francisco, I began professionally renting luxury apartments, then sold designer handbags in NYC and proceeded to learn to run the procurement and contracting in construction site field offices. In all these positions, working with people in a collaborative manner towards mutual goals has been a defining characteristic. I am thrilled to be able to continue to collaborate with dedicated and smart colleagues and support the mission here at RIOC today!

#### *Before joining RIOC you worked for Toll Brothers as an Assistant Project Manager—how did that prepare you for your role within RIOC?*

In my most recent roll prior to joining RIOC, I was working in various locations around Manhattan in luxury real estate development where days rarely went as planned. That taught me to be flexible, adaptable and be effective. There are so many moving parts to RIOC and it's important to be adaptable!

#### *What's your favorite part of working for RIOC, or what's your favorite part of working on Roosevelt Island?*

The Tram! And now also The Lighthouse, and The Girl Puzzle, the Cherry Blossoms. Roosevelt Island is such a special place with an important history, and I am so proud to be part of that community!

## OFFICERS OF THE MONTH

### Officers Kurtis Duncan & Williamton Hernandez

Officers Duncan and Hernandez were named co-Officers of the Month for April in recognition of their outstanding bravery and dedication to serving the Roosevelt Island community. On April 7th at approximately 9:10 PM, Officer Kurtis Duncan responded to a report of a possible smoke and fire condition inside of 546 Main Street on the 6th floor.

Responding officers put out the fire and the dangerous conditions were made safe. Public Safety officers interviewed the complainant that had reported the incident and obtained video footage of the three individuals that started the fire. Officer Duncan, after viewing the video, conducted a floor-by-floor search for any additional evidence and for the individuals that were visible in the video. After canvassing the entire building, Officer Duncan identified an individual that was in the video, and after further investigation, that individual was arrested for arson.

Also in April, Officer Hernandez quickly went into action to stop what could've possibly escalated into a serious assault opposite 645 Main Street. Officer Hernandez observed a group of juveniles following another male juvenile in a menacing and threatening way while displaying a knife. Officer Hernandez moved quickly to handle the situation, and after a brief foot pursuit of the juveniles, he and his partner quickly and safely apprehended them inside of 10 River Road.





## COMMUNITY LEADER

**Wendy Hersh**

**President, Roosevelt Island Disabled Association (RIDA)**

***What would you say is your favorite thing about living on Roosevelt Island?***

I have been living on Roosevelt Island since 1977. I moved here with my son who was 3 yrs. old at that time. We took a ride on the tram during a snowstorm as an excursion for the day and we fell in love with it. The tram had just opened the year before. The grass, the space, the trees and just such a warm and inviting atmosphere. We moved in within 6 months. There was not much here at that time, but that deep sense of community was here. Everyone knew everyone and we all looked out for each other. I had two more children who all grew up on Roosevelt Island. There was so much for our children to take advantage of: sports, a youth center and even more important the comradery I saw among them. We even built an ice-skating rink where PS 217 now stands. My two sons attended the youth center and participated in the various sports activities while my daughter became totally immersed in MSTDA, dance and theatre which enabled her to discover so much about herself. Their children also attended 217 until they moved from the island.

Eventually everything you needed became available on this small island in the middle of the East River: a stationary

store, a hardware store, a grocery store, a restaurant, a library, a school, and a drug store. The best part was that it was the closest place to living in the suburbs and only minutes away from Manhattan or Queens.

There are families from all walks of life here. We're able to learn about other cultures and share their traditions and rituals. It was the first time I saw such an openness for individuals with disabilities. People in wheelchairs became part of the fabric of all our lives. Living side by side with individuals with all types of disabilities taught my children and me so much about acceptance and the desire to help others. As a result of living on RI, I ended up returning to NYU for a master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling and Mental Health at 50 years old and became a Supervisor at the NY State Education Department ACCES-VR working with individuals with Disabilities. It was then that Jim Bates former President, asked me to join the RIDA board. I brought my skills and experience with me.

***How would you describe your role within the Roosevelt Island community?***

I have been in many roles on Roosevelt Island. I had been Vice President of RISA in charge of evening and weekend activities, Counselor and Director of the Moving Forward program and since 2017 President of RIDA and Advocate for the disabled. My goal as RIDA President is to ensure that we advocate and assist those in our community who have any type of disability. Our board (RIDA) is devoted to enhancing the wellbeing of our resident members of all ethnicities and financial backgrounds. We promote the general welfare of our members and provide programs and excursions to meet their physical, social, civic, and recreational needs. During the pandemic, I decided to start a food pantry due to the food insecurity here and thanks to our dedicated board members and wonderful community volunteers, we were and are still able to provide food to those in need in our community. I love collaborating with other agencies and am grateful to be able to promote collaborations with other community organizations such as the youth center, public safety department, the girl scouts, I Dig2Learn

and Carter Burden Network Center for Older Adults.

In 2017, I was awarded the Women of Distinction award from Assembly member Rebecca Seawright. In 2021, I was recognized by Senator José Serrano who awarded me his district's Woman of Distinction honor. In 2022, Mary Coleman, Treasurer of RIDA, and I were honored by Mark Levine as women who led during COVID.

***RIDA has a deep connection to this island. Could you tell us a little about its history, mission and some of the advocacy work you're doing?***

Our disabled population is a forgotten population. So many individuals with a disability are alone without any family and have no assistance throughout their daily lives. The mission of the Roosevelt Island Disabled Association is to improve and enhance the quality of life of individuals with disabilities living on Roosevelt Island, which is quite diverse, as well as reaching out to the rest of the community in need.

For the last 25+ years, RIDA has advocated for a number of disability related causes on Roosevelt Island. From subway accessibility, curb cuts for wheelchairs, to ensuring that all activities on the island are accessible and welcoming for people with disabilities.

Our memberships are free as are all events. We provide activities and programs geared to their strengths and abilities; mental, physical, and emotional, such as Nutrition and Healthy Cooking workshops, Yoga/Pilates classes, intergenerational workshops, monthly social interaction groups as well as holiday events and activities to help prevent isolation. These activities provide our members with a sense of pride and raise their self-esteem. We provide social services to help individuals broaden their knowledge of organizations and facilities that can assist them in daily activities so that they can live a more independent and socially active life. Our Mental Health Fair/Disability Fair will also provide resources needed. We provide our members with safe travel in our wheelchair accessible bus to places that would not be available to them to travel to within and outside of New York City.



RIDA has been able to provide travel to cultural and recreational events such as MOMA, the Museum of Natural History, Shakespeare in the Park, the NY Philharmonic and to the Paley Center for Media. For the past 2 years, RIDA sponsored a holiday celebration for Life Spire residents living on Roosevelt Island, who are diagnosed with developmental disabilities. RIDA was also able to buy a new wheelchair accessible bus in 2020 to provide safe group transportation at no cost to our members. And we continue to run a loan program on an on-need basis that provides assistive devices such as wheelchairs, canes, crutches and walkers to residents, other organization's members, and employees working on RI.

***Could you also tell us about the Roosevelt Island Food Pantry—how did it get started, where does the food come from, how many families do you serve every week, etc.?***

In 2020, at the start of the COVID pandemic, RIDA saw the need to provide food to those with food insecurity on the island. I was able to find options to obtain meals and groceries from multiple resources for our disabled members, seniors and

homebound. RIDA was the one and only island organization that stepped up to the plate and has continuously addressed the food insecurity here for over the last 3 years. We started off by delivering to 60 Roosevelt Island residents, but as there became more of a need for food outside of our membership, our services extended to the entire Roosevelt Island Community. In mid-August of 2020, RIDA started a food pantry once a week in place of deliveries, serving over one hundred individuals/families. We were able to provide a week's worth of food, fresh produce, meats, dairy, canned goods, and shelf stable food. We are unique in that we have a walkthrough pantry where individuals are able to pick what they need, and boxes are made up for homebound individuals for us to deliver to. This has continued up to the present, open to the community every Friday from 4-6:00pm. The pantry seems to fill a need in the community and has grown from one hundred up to 200+ individuals/families a week. RIDA will continue our efforts to reach all Island residents living with a disability, seniors, and those in need, providing them with the necessities needed.



*The Roosevelt Island Food Pantry operates every Friday at the Roosevelt Island Older Adult Center from 4pm - 6pm*



## MEET THE RIOC TEAM

**Akeem Jamal**  
Assistant Vice President,  
Communications and  
Government Affairs

Akeem Jamal serves as Assistant Vice President of Communications and Government Affairs for the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation (RIOC). Mr. Jamal heads the communications team within RIOC, in addition to the Constituent Services Department and the Roosevelt Island Youth Center. He is charged with creating community engagement activities, overseeing internal and external communications, cultivating relationships with city, state, and federal leaders, and sharing the vision of the President & CEO through all modes of communication.

Public service is in Jamal's blood. He joined RIOC in August 2022, bringing years of government experience to Roosevelt Island after serving as Deputy Communications Director at the City of Yonkers – New York State's third-largest City. There, Jamal oversaw a robust team and acted as a senior advisor to Yonkers Mayor Mike Spano, served as a city's spokesperson, created and led new initiatives, organized high-level events for the Office of the Mayor, worked with city, state, and county officials all while spearheading major initiatives.

Jamal graduated Cum Laude from Pace University's Lubin School of Business, holding a Master of Business Administration, and is a proud graduate from Fordham University, holding a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications & Media Studies.

# HAPPENING AROUND ROOSEVELT ISLAND

## 2023 RIOC PUBLIC PURPOSE FUNDS AWARDED

On May 12th the Roosevelt Island Public Purpose Fund announced \$301,000 in two-year grants to 12 island nonprofits working to benefit Roosevelt Island residents and enhance their quality of life. Though the funding is provided by RIOC, the grant award process is managed by New York Community Trust, a public charity that connects people and organizations with high-impact non-profits. The Trust convenes an independent, five-person advisory committee of members of the Roosevelt Island community to review applications and make grant recommendations. This year's full list of grantees includes:

- **The Carter Burden Network, \$29,000**, to provide case management services to Korean-speaking residents.
- **iDig2Learn, \$20,000**, for a community meals, composting, and beautification project.
- **Island Kids, \$20,000**, for summer camp scholarships for 15 or more children.
- **Main Street Theatre and Dance Alliance, \$40,000**, for 200 scholarships and work-study placements and 30 internships.
- **Open Doors, a project of the Center for Transformative Action, \$25,000**, to publish a poetry anthology and provide poetry workshops.
- **PTA PS/IS 217, \$26,000**, for dance arts education for 300 3K, Pre-K, and Kindergarten students.
- **Roosevelt Island: A Living Library/Life Frames, \$28,000**, to expand the "Vegetables and Me" workshop series, provide nutritional workshops, and expand accessibility offerings.
- **Roosevelt Island Concerts, \$13,000**, to hold a performance and community outreach concert series.
- **Roosevelt Island Disabled Association, \$40,000**, to provide food pantry services, field trips, and a mental health fair to disabled and older adult communities.
- **Roosevelt Island Historical Society, \$20,000**, to support the Roosevelt Island visitor center and educational lecture series.
- **Roosevelt Island Senior Association, \$20,000**, for community events and weekend and evening classes for older adults.
- **Roosevelt Island Visual Art Association, \$20,000**, for a series of community events and exhibitions.

In addition, the Fund provided a grant of \$15,000 to Community Resource Exchange to offer a series of free management and network-building workshops to grantees and other Roosevelt Island nonprofits. The workshops will help strengthen nonprofits in areas such as marketing, fundraising, and creating strategic partnerships. Congratulations to all the wonderful non-profits who received these important funds!

## CONGRESSMAN NADLER TOURS THE ISLAND



On May 5th the RIOC Executive Team welcomed Congressman Jerrold Nadler to Roosevelt Island for an important introductory meeting and island tour. Though Congressman Nadler has honorably served Manhattan constituents in the US House of Representatives since 1992, this year marks the first time in his 30-year Congressional tenure that he has ever represented Roosevelt Island. The meeting was held at Blackwell House and afterwards the Congressman received an island-wide tour that included an in-depth look at the Roosevelt Island Youth Center, a visit to the Nellie Bly Monument at Lighthouse Park, and a sneak peek at Sportspark. "We would like to thank Congressman Nadler for taking time out of his busy schedule to meet and for joining us at the grand re-opening of Sportspark," said RIOC President and CEO Shelton Haynes. "RIOC always strives to have a productive dialogue with the elected officials who represent the island at the local, state and federal levels and we look forward to continue working with the Congressman on behalf of our shared Roosevelt Island constituents."





# HAPPENING AROUND ROOSEVELT ISLAND

## RIOC HONORS ROOSEVELT ISLAND GIRL SCOUT TROOP 3233



This past March, Roosevelt Island Girl Scout Troop 3233 accomplished something incredible, finishing in second place at the New York City First Lego league (FLL) Challenge Championship! The Troop, also known as the “Tech Hoppers,” were recognized for their work building and programming robots in addition to researching renewable energies. To mark this great achievement, RIOC President & CEO Shelton Haynes invited the Tech Hoppers to Blackwell House for a special celebratory pizza party. Congratulations again to the Tech Hoppers on making Roosevelt Island proud!

## ROOSEVELT ISLAND BOARD MEMBER MICHAEL SHINOZAKI HONORED



At the May 25th meeting of the Roosevelt Island Board of Directors, RIOC President Shelton Haynes presented former Board Member Michael Shinozaki with a special proclamation honoring his work with the Board and his outstanding service over many years to the Roosevelt Island community. Shinozaki served on the RIOC Board from 2004-2009 at the appointment of then Mayor Bloomberg and then Governor Pataki. He was then reappointed in 2010 and served till he retired last December 2022. Throughout his exemplary Board career, Shinozaki was always focused on finding ways to improve the island and worked tirelessly to strengthen the Public Safety Department. He was also deeply committed to fostering better relations between RIOC and the larger community. “Michael Shinozaki was an amazing advocate for Roosevelt Island and a committed partner to RIOC,” said President Haynes. “We will miss him deeply on the RIOC Board and wish nothing but the best to him and his wife Lynne as they embark on their next chapter.”



## THE ROOSEVELT ISLAND ESSENTIAL WORKERS HONORED DURING PUBLIC SERVICE RECOGNITION WEEK

To mark Public Service Recognition Week, RIOC President Shelton Haynes and members of the RIOC Executive Team hosted a special luncheon at the Graduate Hotel for the corporation’s Transportation, Grounds, Facilities and Maintenance Departments. The luncheon was an opportunity for RIOC leadership to show their deep appreciation for all the incredible essential workers who help make Roosevelt Island such a wonderful place. Thank you for all your hard work!



# HAPPENING AROUND ROOSEVELT ISLAND

## EARTHLOVE DAY RECAP

On Saturday April 22nd Roosevelt Island celebrated “EarthLove Day,” with tables and activities dedicated to celebrating the environment and all the incredible natural beauty we enjoy here on Roosevelt Island. A big thank you to all the community groups who participated in the festivities!



## THE BLACKWELL FAMILY VISITS THEIR NAMESAKE ON ROOSEVELT ISLAND

On May 18th a member of the Blackwell family, Wilson Blackwell Partridge, visited Roosevelt Island for the first time in many years and took a tour of Blackwell House, the iconic former home of their ancestor James Blackwell. The charming wooden home was built in 1796 for the Blackwells, who owned the island for many years, and the cottage is the sixth oldest farmhouse in New York City. In 1823 the island was purchased by New York City to build institutions, and Blackwell House became living quarters for wardens of the almshouse, the hospitals, and the penitentiary. Greeting Mr. Partridge for the house tour was Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation Assistant Vice President of Communications and Government Affairs Akeem Jamal.





# UPDATES FROM RIOC

## RIOC Cuts the Ribbon on New Roosevelt Island Pickleball Courts

The Roosevelt Island Community had been clamoring for pickleball on the island for some time, and on May 12th island advocates joined RIOC leadership for the official ribbon cutting of two newly dedicated pickleball courts located behind Sportspark. The highly anticipated, \$100,000 project that brought pickleball to Roosevelt Island included the resurfacing of the courts, the repair of major sub-surface cracks, repainting and coating of the new surface, and the installation of pickleball netting.

Pickleball courts are open from sunrise to sunset and do not require a permit to play. For those interested in learning about pickleball, the Roosevelt Island Senior Association (RISA) is providing RISA members with free beginner lessons and round robin play on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9 AM to 12 noon. The 9-10AM block will be for beginners, with balls and paddles provided. 11AM-12PM will be for intermediate and advanced players. The RISA program is intergenerational, designed for adults of all ages (don't forget to wear sneakers while playing). To participate, simply sign-up for a \$25 annual RISA membership by visiting [www.risaonline.org/membershipform](http://www.risaonline.org/membershipform).



## RIOC Restores Original Roosevelt Island Benches in Older Adult Center

During a visit to the Carter Burden Network Roosevelt Island Older Adult Center on April 26th, Center Director Lisa Fernandez had mentioned to RIOC President & CEO Shelton Haynes that there were original Roosevelt Island benches in the center's courtyard that, after many years, had fallen into rough shape. She wanted to know if there was anything RIOC could do, so Mr. Haynes arranged to have the benches temporarily removed, cleaned, and repainted. Here is the before picture, and here are the restored benches today, back in the Older Adult Center courtyard for all to enjoy!





## UPDATES FROM RIOC

### President and CEO Shelton Haynes Announces New 10-Point Public Safety Plan for Roosevelt Island

In May, RIOC President & CEO Shelton J. Haynes announced a new 10-point plan aimed at strengthening public safety while re-affirming RIOC's commitment to improving the quality of life for island residents. The new 10-Point Plan takes a holistic approach to increasing island safety, bringing together stakeholders from the community, schools, Public Safety Department (PSD), and New York Police Department (NYPD) to address concerns ranging from violent offenses and petty crimes to child bullying and traffic congestion.

#### The 10-point Public Safety Plan includes:

1. A newly formed Island Stabilization Team which has dedicated PSD foot patrols across the island to re-direct resources in the Southtown area and Main Street throughout the day. PSD is also introducing bike patrols across the island as a part of the Island Stabilization Team beginning on June 3, 2023.
2. RIOC successfully advocating for better social services. The corporation is working with Hudson Related - they came through with "Breaking Ground" an organization that specializes in social services. Their services will begin in resident buildings on June 1. In addition to other Island buildings, PSD will be conducting verticals in Building 460 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
3. Increased targeted PSD presence in areas deemed "hotspots" on the island.
4. Fully integrating the island camera system with the NYPD's system. The decision to integrate the two systems will allow for faster information sharing between the two departments and improve the ability to investigate reported crimes expeditiously.

5. Developing a plan of action to combat bullying. RIOC met with leadership from P.S./I.S. 217, NYPD, DOE District 2 Superintendent, Borough Safety Director's, and Field Safety Counsels to discuss the on-going bullying issues and come up with a plan of action to deal with the problem before it escalates to the level of PSD/NYPD involvement. The meeting also included a PSD Youth Officer.
6. Launching a new constituent services department. Island residents will be able to speak directly with RIOC about their issues which will then be escalated through proper channels – to be announced in the coming week.
7. Stronger traffic enforcement. PSD will crack down on traffic enforcement across all modes of transportation on the island. Designated traffic officers will address illegal parking, and double parking which will mitigate traffic congestion.
8. Increasing youth services. In the near future, RIOC will announce available programming for Island teens and increase collaboration with Island youth to work on expanding the youth services offered to the community. The Community youth workshops will consist of topics such as anti-bullying, social media engagement and cyber stalking.
9. RIOC will continue to engage building management to address resident reported hotspots and have direct rapport with PSD for immediate response.
10. Creating community engagement programming for Island youth in conjunction with NYPD.

*"Roosevelt Islanders expect a safe environment, and the measures we announced are designed to address a whole host of issues that are top of mind for our community," said RIOC President Haynes. "Starting with our first PSD Community Engagement Meeting back in April, RIOC has been adamant about hearing directly from island residents about ways we can make people feel safer and more secure. Our 10-point plan considers all the feedback we've received and will serve as our blueprint for island safety moving forward."*

"Some of these initiatives have already gone into effect," said Assistant Vice President & Public Safety Chief Kevin Brown. "Island residents should already notice the increased foot patrols, in addition to PSD officers stationing themselves strategically at different points around the island. We know that bullying has been a pervasive issue for certain students at P.S. 217, so our more formal engagement with school leadership is intended to address the issue at its root. Beefing up our youth services should also mitigate some of the bullying by providing our younger island residents with more positive outlets to help develop life-skills."



# UPDATES FROM RIOC

## Sportspark Officially Re-Opens

The wait is finally over. Sportspark officially re-opened to the public on May 19th following a multi-year, \$12 million renovation that saw nearly every square foot of the facility's interior overhauled. The complex had been closed to the public since August 2021; it was in dire need of significant rehabilitation work given its age and deteriorated condition. The renovation work completely revamped Sportspark and was highlighted by a new indoor swimming pool, basketball court, fitness center and much more.

Joining RIOC President Shelton Haynes at the official Grand Re-Opening Ribbon Cutting Ceremony were Congressman Jerrold Nadler, representatives from State Senator Liz Krueger and City Council Member Julie Menin's offices, members of the RIOC leadership team including Director of Capital Projects Prince Shah, Sportspark Director Joseph Natale, and hundreds of members from the Roosevelt Island community.

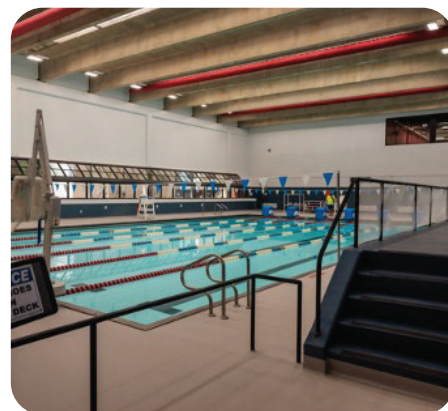
### Major improvements to the facility include:

- A new, state-of-the-art fitness center;
- A new 7,200 square foot pool and elevated amenities;
- Upgraded HVAC & Lighting;
- Installation of energy-efficient systems;
- A reimagined gymnasium;
- A recreational game room;
- Brand-new locker rooms;
- Brand-new single & family restrooms;
- Brand-new showers;
- A fitness studio;
- Event function space;
- Renovated common areas;
- A reception check-in system; and
- Resurfacing of the building's façade.



"Sportspark is a deeply important part of the Roosevelt Island fabric," said Haynes. "Since 1977 the facility has provided the community with a place to exercise, play, gather and have fun, but over time it had deteriorated to a degree that required a significant, well-capitalized overhaul. When we closed the aging complex in 2021 for this important renovation work we knew it was going to be difficult for the community. But we also knew that when Sportspark finally re-opened, the transformation was going to be incredible and well worth the wait. Now everyone can enjoy this state-of-the-art facility, with memberships priced affordably for island residents and non-residents of all ages. The before and after photos don't do it justice. Tours are now open; I encourage everyone to see this remarkable new facility in-person and learn about all the exciting things Sportspark has to offer."

"It is an honor to be able to welcome the Roosevelt Island community back to Sportspark after such extensive renovations," said Joseph Natale, Director of Sportspark. "We hope this amazing facility exceeds the expectations of our members and becomes a central hub for the community to seek their exercise initiatives. My team is incredibly excited to provide an elevated fitness experience to our community!"



# UPDATES FROM RIOC

## RIOC Announces New Constituent Services Department

Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation President Shelton Haynes recently announced the formation of a new Constituent Services Department within RIOC that meets directly with community members to handle constituent concerns as they arise. The department is part of RIOC's new 10-Point Public Safety Plan aimed at tackling island issues directly and will be tasked with fostering greater one-on-one engagement between the corporation and the Roosevelt Island community.

Island residents who wish to discuss operational matters related to Roosevelt Island are now able to schedule time to sit-down directly with constituent services and have their casework assigned to the proper channels within RIOC. Constituent services will also track the assigned case and remain in contact with the island resident throughout the duration of the casework process.

Beginning Monday, June 5th, Constituent Services will offer office hours by appointment throughout the island by visiting the website [calendly.com/constituentservices/constituent-services-appointment-booking?month=2023-05](https://calendly.com/constituentservices/constituent-services-appointment-booking?month=2023-05). The Constituent Services Department will consist of seven members from Team RIOC, led by AVP Akeem Jamal:

1. Akeem Jamal, Assistant Vice President of Communications & Government Affairs
2. Bryant Daniels, Director of Communications & Public Affairs
3. Amanda Dominguez, Communications and Constituent Services Liaison
4. Anita Fisher, Special Assistant
5. Meg McCabe, Special Assistant, Operations
6. Stephanie Patino, Administrative Services Clerk, Public Safety Department
7. Tory Ferguson, Office Clerk / Front Desk Associate

The RIOC team will handle in-person constituent meetings while still answering resident phone calls and inquiries outside the current constituent service scheduled hours. The team of individuals includes RIOC members from all pertinent departments to ensure there is a thoughtful, 360-degree approach to addressing all Roosevelt Island concerns.

If you'd like to schedule a meeting with Constituent Services, please email [info@rioc.ny.gov](mailto:info@rioc.ny.gov).



Roosevelt Island  
Operating Corporation


**PRESIDENT & CEO SHELTON J. HAYNES  
ANNOUNCES  
NEW CONSTITUENT SERVICES  
DEPARTMENT**



Meg McCabe



Amanda Dominguez



Akeem Jamal



Bryant Daniels



Tory Ferguson



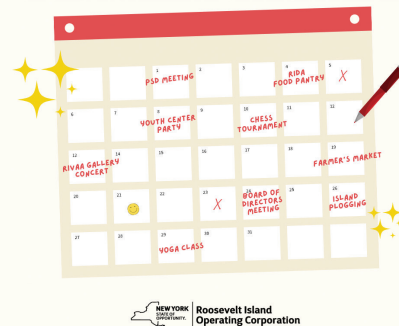
Anita Fisher



Stephanie Patino

## COMMUNITY EVENTS CALENDAR IS HERE!

[HTTPS://RIOC.NY.GOV/637/COMMUNITY-EVENTS-CALENDAR](https://rioc.ny.gov/637/community-events-calendar)



## Community Calendar Launches on RIOC Website

The official Roosevelt Island Community Calendar was launched this past May on the RIOC website and is continually updated by the RIOC communications department with new and exciting events happening on the island. The page also includes a form where community members can submit their events directly to RIOC for inclusion on the calendar. Go to **RIOC.gov** and click the "Community" tab, then select "Community Events Calendar" or visit [rioc.ny.gov/637/Community-Events-Calendar](https://rioc.ny.gov/637/Community-Events-Calendar) to learn more!

## OMNY Update

RIOC continues to stay in close contact with the MTA regarding the installation of OMNY service for the Roosevelt Island Tram. The latest update indicates OMNY installation remains on track for end of July/early August of this year.

*This newsletter has been designed using assets from Freepik.com*